OWEN BROTHERS METERING UK | EST. 1953

Gas and Electricity Meters Explained

Main Meters, Sub-Meters & Tenant Billing

Sub-Metering | Tenant Billing | Gas Meters | Electric Meters | Landlord Guide

owen-brothers.com/gas-and-electric-meters-uk

Two Utilities, Two Completely Different Systems

Every UK property with gas and electricity has a separate meter for each utility

GAS METER

Measures gas volume in cubic metres, converted to kWh for billing

- Governed by the Gas Act 1986
- Installation: Gas Safe registered engineer
- Owen Brothers stock: Metro Gas STS prepayment

ELECTRIC METER

Measures electricity consumed directly in kilowatt-hours (kWh)

- Governed by the Electricity Act 1989
- Installation: qualified electrician
- Owen Brothers stock: full sub-meter range

Gas and electricity cannot be combined into a single meter — even smart meters use two separate devices sharing one hub.

Gas Meter vs Electric Meter: Key Differences

Feature	Gas Meter	Electric Meter
Measures	Gas volume (m3/ft3)	Electricity (kWh)
Location	Meter box / utility area	Meter box / consumer unit
Installation	Gas Safe engineer (most work)	Part P electrician
Smart meter?	Yes (SMETS2)	Yes (SMETS2)
Sub-metering?	Yes	Yes
Legal framework	Gas Act 1986 + MIR	Electricity Act 1989, Sch.7 + MIR
Owen Brothers stock	Metro Gas STS (prepayment)	Full electric sub-meter range

Both meter types require appropriate legal approval before their readings can be used for billing purposes.

Sub-Metering for Landlords & Multi-Occupancy Properties

Installed downstream of the main utility meters, sub-meters record the energy used by a specific tenant, apartment, or commercial unit, allowing landlords to allocate energy costs based on actual usage.

Electric Sub-Metering: Where to Start

Often the natural starting point — straightforward to install on existing distribution boards, cost-effective, and provides accurate consumption data for tenant billing. Installation always by a qualified electrician.

Gas Sub-Metering: Extra Complexity

Most work on gas appliances, fittings and pipework must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Owen Brothers stock the Metro Gas STS pre-payment meter for landlord gas applications.

Owen Brothers has supplied thousands of approved sub-meters to landlords, electricians, and facilities managers across the UK.

Smart Meters vs Sub-Meters: What's the Difference?

Smart Meter

- Installed by the energy supplier
- Measures TOTAL property consumption
- Automatically sends readings for billing
- Does not replace private sub-meters

Sub-Meter

- Privately installed by the landlord
- Measures INDIVIDUAL unit / tenant usage
- Used for allocation and tenant billing
- Works alongside the smart meter

For landlords, smart meters and sub-meters typically work alongside each other, not in place of one another.

The Legal Framework: Meter Approval for Billing

Meters installed for billing purposes should meet the relevant UK approval requirements under the Measuring Instruments Regulations 2016.

Gas Meters

Subject to the Gas Act 1986 and relevant UK metrology legislation.

Electric Meters

Subject to Schedule 7 of the Electricity Act 1989 and the Measuring Instruments Regulations.

If Non-Approved

May result in disputes over accuracy and could lead to regulatory enforcement.

Maximum Resale Price: Under Ofgem guidance, landlords should not charge tenants more than they pay their own supplier, subject to applicable legislation and guidance.

Prepayment and Remote Monitoring

For both gas and electricity sub-metering

Prepayment Options

Prepayment sub-meters are available for both gas and electricity through the Owen Brothers Metro range. Smart prepayment lets tenants top up online or via app.

Landlords get a portal showing real-time balances and consumption per unit.

Remote Monitoring

Industrial-grade 4G modems with multi-network SIM connect compatible metering devices to the OBmeters.com portal.

View data remotely from any laptop, tablet, or phone — no site visits required. Pre-wired kits available for complete solutions.

Owen Brothers can supply fully assembled, pre-wired metering kits to simplify on-site installation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do gas and electric meters need to be in the same location?

No. They're separate devices and don't need to be adjacent, though most UK properties keep both in a meter box or utility cupboard.

Can I install a gas sub-meter myself?

No. Most gas work must be done by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Electric sub-meters need a qualified electrician.

Do I need approval for meters used for billing?

Yes. Gas and electric meters used for billing should meet the relevant UK approval requirements individually.

Can I charge tenants more than I pay my supplier?

Under Ofgem's Maximum Resale Price guidance, landlords should not charge more than they pay, subject to applicable legislation.

Does Owen Brothers supply gas meters?

Our main range is electric sub-metering, but we also stock the Metro Gas STS prepayment meter for gas applications.

What happens if I use a non-approved meter for billing?

It could result in regulatory action and may allow tenants to dispute charges based on the meter readings.

Summary

- Gas and electricity are always metered separately — never combined into one device
- Gas meter work requires a Gas Safe registered engineer, electric requires a qualified electrician
- Meters used for tenant billing should meet the relevant UK approval requirements
- Sub-meters work alongside smart meters, not instead of them
- Prepayment and remote monitoring options available for both gas and electric
- Ofgem's Maximum Resale Price guidance applies to both utilities equally

Full guide: owen-brothers.com/gas-and-electric-meters-uk | +44 (0) 161 624 6211